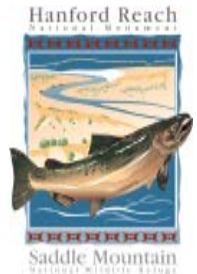




Hanford Reach National Monument

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

Planning Update 3, October 2003



Greetings!

Much has happened since the second planning update was distributed in August of 2003. The Comprehensive Conservation Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS) process continues to move forward. Preliminary CCP management alternatives and goals have been drafted. Objectives for each goal are being prepared with input from the Federal Advisory Committee, cooperating agencies and the public. This update will explain these milestones and the following steps in the process.

What's in this Update?

Preliminary Draft
Management Alternatives

Preliminary Draft
Monument Goals

Check out our Website at:
<http://hanfordreach.fws.gov>

E-mail to:
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Call or fax Monument staff at:
Phone: (509) 371-1801
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Burrowing Owl - © Pacific Northwest National Laboratory

Presentation of Preliminary Draft Management Alternatives

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has developed four preliminary draft alternatives and thirteen preliminary goals for management of the Hanford Reach National Monument (Monument). The alternatives are based on Refuge purposes, the Hanford Reach Presidential Proclamation (Proclamation), draft vision and goals, legal mandates, comments gathered throughout the public scoping process, input from public planning workshops, and advice from the Federal Advisory Committee.

Each of the four alternatives takes a different management approach for the Monument. In this update, you will discover how each alternative will fulfill the Monument's vision. The goals for the Monument are the same across the four management alternatives. The management focus, however, varies across the alternatives depending on the management theme.

The next formal comment period will occur with the release of the draft CCP/EIS, however, informal comments are welcome throughout the planning process.

Planning Schedule

The first milestones in the planning process are completed and a schedule of the remaining steps in the process follows. The schedule may change as the process unfolds. Changes will be announced in future updates and on the Monument's website.

Key Steps in the Comprehensive Conservation Planning process

Public Scoping	Completed June-October 2002
Vision and Goals Drafted	Completed Winter 2002
Preliminary Alternatives	Fall 2003
Draft CCP/EIS	Fall 2004
Final CCP/EIS Record of Decision	2005

Upcoming 2003 Federal Advisory Committee Meeting

December 4
12:30 - 4:30

Preliminary Draft Alternative Development

The Service's Comprehensive Conservation Plan process requires studying a range of alternatives for future management of the Monument. Development of these alternatives is an important part of the process because it allows managers, stakeholders, and interested citizens to explore varying approaches to protect Monument resources, manage public use, provide access, and direct future infrastructure. The development of alternatives ensures that environmental impacts and concerns and ideas voiced by stakeholders and the public are analyzed prior to selecting a final management approach for the Monument.

In formulating these alternatives, the Service, the cooperating agencies team, and the Federal Advisory Committee considered three primary questions:

WHY was the Monument established and what is its purpose?

WHAT is the vision for future management of the Monument?

HOW do we turn this vision into reality?



Waddling White Pelican - © Peter Wallack

Answers to the "Why" question come from the presidential proclamation which established the monument, the purpose of Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. During the planning process the answers to "Why" form the foundation, while Service employees, stakeholders, and other interested publics provide the structure for answering "What" the Monument will become and "How" we get there.

Please note that the following alternatives are in a very early phase of development. They will continue to be refined throughout the planning process. Public comments have played a critical role in identifying issues and objectives for the future management of the Monument. In Fall, 2004, the Service will release a draft CCP/EIS for public comment. The Service will use these comments to further refine the alternatives and select a course of action for managing the Monument.

Preliminary Draft Management Alternative Themes

Four alternative themes are described here. They are conceptual in nature and focus on what future resource conditions and visitor uses would occur at the Monument, rather than on details concerning how recommendations should be achieved. For example, the size and location of parking lots and restrooms will not be addressed here, but will eventually be outlined in the draft CCP under objectives, strategies, and in step-down plans.

Alternative A - No Action - Continue Existing Management

Management focuses on protecting and enhancing biological and cultural resources, fire protection, fire rehabilitation, and maintenance of existing facilities. Land use designations and public access that were in place at the time of Monument establishment are maintained. Access for recreation, interpretive and educational purposes is allowed year-round in designated areas.

Alternative B - Conservation of Proclamation Resources with a Restoration Emphasis

Management focuses on protecting and conserving the resources described in the Proclamation. Restoration, restoration-based research, and information sharing are priorities. Educational and interpretive opportunities are provided consistent with this alternative. Recreation and public access may be reduced from current levels, modified in time, or redirected away from sensitive areas.

Alternative C - Conservation of Proclamation Resources with an Open Spaces Emphasis

Management focuses on protecting and conserving the resources described in the Proclamation. Strategies are implemented to create and maintain areas that are free of development, both for conservation purposes and to maintain natural landscapes and solitude opportunities. Educational and interpretive opportunities are provided consistent with this alternative. Recreation and access are about the same as the current level, with potential changes in the location of access and facilities.

Alternative D - Conservation of Proclamation Resources with a Public Use Emphasis

Management focuses on protecting and conserving the resources described in the Proclamation. Priority is placed upon providing increased opportunities for public use and enjoyment of the Monument. Recreation opportunities, access and visitor facilities are increased from the current level. Educational and interpretive opportunities are provided consistent with this alternative.



Preliminary Draft Monument Goals

The Monument's draft goals were developed through the cooperation and assistance of many individuals, public and private agencies, tribes and organizations, and reflect the basis for a management plan that will benefit everyone while protecting the Monument's resources. Each of the management alternatives must satisfy this set of goals. Development of the CCP—and the implementation of these goals—will honor valid existing rights and comply with Service policies and procedures, the Hanford Reach National Monument Proclamation and applicable laws.

The Monument's draft goals follow.

- 1) Conserve and restore the plants, animals and shrub-steppe and other upland habitats native to the Columbia Basin.
- 2) Conserve and restore the communities of fish and other aquatic and riparian-dependent plant and animal species native to the Hanford Reach National Monument.
- 3) Enhance Monument resources by establishing and maintaining connectivity with neighboring habitats.
- 4) Protect the distinctive geological and paleontological resources of the Monument.
- 5) Protect and acknowledge the Native American, settler, atomic and Cold War histories of the Monument to ensure present and future generations recognize the significance of the area's past.
- 6) Provide a rich variety of educational and interpretive opportunities for visitors to gain an appreciation, knowledge and understanding of the Monument, compatible with resource protection.
- 7) Provide access and opportunities for high-quality recreation compatible with resource protection.



Canoeing the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River - Ron Crouse, USFWS

- 8) Protect the natural visual character and promote the opportunity to experience solitude on the Monument.
- 9) Honor treaty rights in accordance with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Native American policy.
- 10) Foster, support and respect cooperative partnerships that preserve valid existing rights while protecting the purposes of the Monument. Recognize and cooperate with tribal, state and local governments and federal agencies in the discharge of statutory responsibilities. Enhance relationships and partnerships with community organizations and neighbors furthering management goals.
- 11) Facilitate research compatible with resource protection, emphasizing research that contributes to management goals of the Monument.
- 12) Establish and maintain a cooperative fire management program that protects facilities, resources and neighbors and fulfills natural resource management objectives.
- 13) Provide infrastructure, operations and maintenance capabilities that are in harmony with Monument purposes.



Rattlesnake Mountain - © Rich Steele

Developing Objectives and Strategies

For each CCP goal, a set of objectives is being developed that will specify how the goal is achieved under each alternative. The fully developed range of alternatives will have more than 100 objectives. For each objective, strategies will be developed that identify specific tools or actions that will be used to accomplish the objective. The draft objectives and strategies will be displayed in the draft CCP. The preliminary draft alternatives and several objectives in the early development stage are presented on the following pages.



Comparison of Preliminary Draft Alternatives with selected examples of Preliminary Draft Objectives

<i>Areas of Management Focus</i>	<i>Alternative A - No Action Continue Existing Management</i>	<i>Alternative B - Conservation of Proclamation Resources with a Restoration Emphasis</i>
Terrestrial Management	<p>Restoration is limited to efforts following a disturbance event (e.g., fire or construction). Based upon emergency funding allocations, restoration includes the stabilization and rehabilitation of fire impacted lands within three years of fire occurrence.</p> <p>Through partnerships, non-native invasive species are mapped, identified and prioritized for treatment annually.</p>	<p>Conduct restoration activities on 6,000 acres of upland habitat annually to reestablish pre-European settlement conditions.</p> <p>In addition to actions in Alternative A, treat 20,000 acres of the Monument annually for invasive species.</p>
Cultural/Historic Resource Management	<p>Five hundred to 2,500 acres of ground-disturbing projects Monument-wide are surveyed to comply with cultural resource protection laws.</p>	<p>In addition to project compliance surveys, identify data gaps and survey a minimum of 2,000 non-project acres a year beginning within two years of the CCP being adopted.</p>
Education and Interpretation	<p>An interpretive plan for the Monument currently does not exist. Informational presentations are made to various groups, upon request, as limited staff time allows.</p>	<p>Within six years of the CCP being adopted, develop and implement an interpretive plan for the Monument, incorporating a variety of interpretive opportunities to appeal to a broad spectrum of interests and learning styles.</p>
Public Use and Access	<p>The Vernita Bridge area is used for undeveloped boat launching and unauthorized camping, with few restrictions on access.</p> <p>Camping is not permitted on the Monument, except for unauthorized camping activities that have occurred in the Vernita Bridge area.</p>	<p>Provide for day-use and an undeveloped boat launch in the Vernita Bridge area, with activities confined to a limited area.</p> <p>Camping is not permitted on the Monument.</p>

Alternative C - Conservation of Proclamation Resources with an Open Spaces Emphasis

Alternative D - Conservation of Proclamation Resources with a Public Use Emphasis

Conduct restoration activities on 4,000 acres of upland habitat annually to reestablish pre-European settlement conditions.

Conduct restoration activities on 2,000 acres of upland habitat annually to reestablish pre-European settlement conditions.

In addition to actions in Alternative A, treat 15,000 acres of the Monument annually for invasive species.

In addition to actions in Alternative A, treat 10,000 acres of the Monument annually for noxious weeds.

In addition to project compliance surveys, identify data gaps and survey a minimum of 1,000 non-project acres a year beginning within two years of the CCP being adopted.

In addition to project compliance surveys, identify data gaps and survey a minimum of 500 non-project acres a year beginning within two years of the CCP being adopted.

Within four years of the CCP being adopted, develop and implement an interpretive plan for the Monument, incorporating a variety of interpretive opportunities to appeal to a broad spectrum of interests and learning styles.

Within two years of the CCP being adopted, develop and implement an interpretive plan for the Monument, incorporating a variety of interpretive opportunities to appeal to a broad spectrum of interests and learning styles.

Same as Alternative B.

Develop the Vernita Bridge area as a boat launch and camping area.

Provide a limited number of boat-in campsites, with appropriate resource and use restrictions, within five years of the CCP being adopted.

Provide selected developed camping opportunities on the Monument, with appropriate resource and use restrictions, within seven years of the CCP being adopted.



Copies of the Hanford Reach National Monument brochure are available for free. Contact us to request one.

Visit our website at:
<http://hanfordreach.fws.gov>

The Hanford Reach National Monument was designated by Presidential Proclamation 7319 on June 9, 2000. Among the many features the Monument was established to protect are:

- 45 miles of the Hanford Reach, the last free-flowing, nontidal stretch of the Columbia River in the U.S.
- One of the last intact large blocks of shrub-steppe habitat in the Columbia River Basin
- 42 species of mammals including Rocky Mountain elk, mule deer, badger and bobcat
- 44 species of fish and productive spawning grounds for salmon, sturgeon and bass
- Paleontological fossil remains and historic resources
- Native American use and occupation spanning 8,000 years
- Dramatic geologic landscapes shaped by tectonic, volcanic and erosive forces
- 238 species of migratory and resident birds and wintering habitat for bald eagles, white pelicans and many species of waterfowl
- 725 species of vascular plants including 47 species of conservation concern



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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Address correction service

